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BLUE LAKES
TO
GOLDEN GATES

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SAXE CHURCHILL STIMSON



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BLUE LAKES
TO
GOLDEN GATES

BY
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"THE TRENCH LAD", "THE LINCOLN CABIN"
and "THE FARM"

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TO MY MOTHER

BLUE LAKES TO GOLDEN GATES

Blue—blue, and still the blue marine,
All the world seems turned to liquid blue,
With a thousand whitecaps tossing on the scene
Where nature spreads her royal shades in richest hue.
And each changing hour brings features new
To him who looks upon the lakes,
The Great Lakes of panoramic view,
And a full draft of beauty one partakes,
And ecstasy of mind and soul awakes!

They are a necklace of six jewels
Suspended o'er the ever-growing middle west,
Ontario is a turquoise, St. Clair an opal, and Superior
rules

A lordly garnishment o'er a nation's mighty breast.
Winter gales have blown and summer winds carest,
The four-deck steamer bears its load the sights to see,
Gay vacationists set forth upon a golden quest,
Before the freshening breeze the yacht is running free,
And sailor folk are laughing in their glee!

Here is the City, where pleasure-seekers view the folly,
 And tour the merchants' rich and glittering show,
 Ride up and down, in motor car and clanging trolley,
 Chicago's teeming millions rushing to and fro,
 Her thronging shoppers, ever on the go
 In quest of commerce, and dress parade;
 Rich and poor, and high and low,
 A world metropolis here have laid,
 And a grand and mighty city, have they made.

Avenues and thoroughfares, all that gold
 Could do for men here has been done,
 From this tower one doth behold
 The gorgeous city sparkle in the sun.
 Temples of Art! Temples of Music! Temples of
 Religion!
 Palace homes the pork-trade won,
 Mistress of the lakes, proud in her position,
 And still those minarets that sparkle in the sun,
 And still shall glisten, till time's race is run.

Illinois is the corn-belt of the world, on ranch and farm
 Is reared the tassled stalks to fatten hog and steer,
 Rich black soil, and never failing charm,
 If one would seek a paradise they have it here!
 And this is the growing season of the year,
 Hay cocked up, and fields of waving grain,
 Orchards of red apples, to every boy so dear,
 And lazy cows, fly-fighting in the lane,
 And still those waving fields, like ocean's watery main.

Flow on, thou mighty River, ever flowing!
 We stand on Mississippi's rock crowned bluff,
 And view a hundred miles of fruited acres growing,
 The silver river southward, ever winding towards the
 gulf.

In these rich vales is food enough
 To feed a nation, and to spare;
 Here thrifty men grow their fundamental stuff
 Beyond the cities' blare,
 They do their job, and for our plaudits little care.

LaSalle sailed these waters;—gift of France
 To a new world, he left his ease for the forest wild,
 Knight of purest shield and fairest lance,
 He bore God's name and word to the painted forest
 child.

And no stain of cruel conquest has defiled
 The page in history that he left;
 Courageous, bold, yet kind and mild,
 His life unto mankind, a gift,
 His priestly memory, in earth's dull skies, a shining
 rift.

There is pleasure in the zest of travel,
 There is diversion, in the passing scene,
 The flying miles, so fresh and novel,
 The range of hills and the wood between.
 And now beyond, the silver lake is seen
 And mid-day sun, and cloud, and sky!
 The landscape is a park-like green,
 We sit in luxury and watch the world fly by,
 And always something new to please and gratify.

Corn—corn—more corn, and rye and wheat!
Iowa's undulating fields, Nebraska's plain,
It takes a mighty crop to let the whole world eat,
And there the harvest-binder rattles out its loud refrain;
And now we're crashing through a town again!
And now the chef is serving lunch,
He brings some roasted fowls in,
And choicest fruit of Kansas in a bunch.
And weary travelers look, and laugh, and munch.

All the nation knows of Custer's lone last stand,
The yellow haired old chieftain fighting to the death,
His troopers pillaged by an Indian band,
And scorned surrender to the latest breath.
There on Little Big Horn place a wreath,
Forever may their deed remain!
A glorious heritage they do bequeath,
Like Paul, for them to die was gain,
For the hero, never dies in vain!

We cross the dark Missouri on a giant trestle
 That joins two cities lying on our way,
 Here again the crowds do rush and jostle,
 We see the place at closing in of day.
 Just why the people love a crowd 'tis hard to say,
 When just beyond the town there's plenty room for
 each,
 It is man's foolish, ignominious way,
 There's garden-farms, fresh air, and lands within their
 reach,
 Push out, Oh Man, and let sweet Nature beauties
 teach!

This is the unfenced domain of the ancient Indian,
 The Redman, of forest, stream, and lake,
 Comanche, Sioux, Dakota, roamed the region
 The natural rulers of woodland, bush and break;
 And a goodly living from the wilds did he take,
 Speckled trout, gray goose, and whirring bird,
 His spinning arrow pursued the duck and drake,
 With wary stealth he crept upon the wild deer herd,
 And spoke the savage beast, with unknown answering
 word.

Is this the prairie, of old romantic story?
 Where famous cow-boys roped the charging steer!
 It is a region of departed glory
 The tender pale-face camps and travels, without fear.
 And this is the blooming season of the year
 With many wild-flowers and plains of waving grass,
 The bark of prairie-dog we hear,
 And wild-fowls calling from the dense morass,
 And then we think of white-topped wagon trains,
 winding westward towards the mountain pass.

Times of hardy pioneers, the Last West!
 There were no fences, all the earth was free,
 It brings emotion to a manly breast,
 They rode the plains, as sailors ride the sea;
 It was a vast expanse without the grove and tree
 Of other regions, horse and rider king!
 The cow-boy mourns, Oh bring them back to me
 When the Indian's bow did sing,
 And caught the swooping bird upon the wing!

The Deadwood coach made Denver in six days,
A million buffalo thundered o'er the plain,
Pony express dashed through in relays,
And troops of noble wild-horse, with proud neck and
 flowing mane,
Justly of their beauty vain!
The hunter's dinner, the camp-fire smoke,
Bring, Oh bring them back again,
The taught lasso the mustang broke,
The Spirit of the West a message spoke:

Here shall rise an empire grandier than the last,
To rear up men, and men shall rule,
I see the masses triumphant at the last,
I see the rise of towns, and homes, and school!
God save the world from foolish duel
That sets one class against another,
He is but a simple tool
Who withholds justice from his brother,
And give the folks of lowest rank as good a chance
 as any other.

America! gird up your strength and save the State!
We're with you to the triumph's end,
The brave and true alone are great,
And down the ranks, a cheer to send.
For the people need a faithful friend
Their battle-fields to win!
The world's at stake and you can lend
Your all to bring the better in,
And stand for ideals new, and not the dead has-been!

Speeding towards the setting sun,
Riding, riding,
The day is done, the day is done,
And the sun is hiding, hiding,
And sounds of falling night, confiding,
Tomorrow mountains! we shall see the mountains!
Mountains with their peaks and domes, and leaping
 fountains!
Speeding towards the setting sun,—
And the day is done.

II

Morning awoke in the prairie, the sun a red ball
 Rose from out that sea of pampas grass,
 There was the early bird's twitter and call,
 And then—all the west was a mighty ridge of dull
 brown craggy mass:

It was the Rockies! Peaks, domes, vast slopes, and
 wild crevass!

Filling the horizon fifty miles away,
 All our dreams of grandeur it did surpass,
 Peak on peak, dome on dome, in magnificent bold
 array,

Cast up by nature's titanic birth-throe day!

Colorado is the nation's treasury of gold and silver,
 and lead

For commerce, and rivals Switzerland with its tower-
 ing peak,

It is the country's water-shed,
 And curious tourists wander o'er those hills, and play
 at hide-and-seek;

There is the sunny valley below, and above the snow-
 clad summit, cold and bleak.

It is the precious metal state,
 In its rare air, strong you grow, though weak;
 In few words its token to relate,
 Princely state of gold and silver, rich and great.

Off to the mountains, for fun and diversion!
To stand on the heights with the world far below,
From summit to summit to ride the excursion,
The dash of the waters, as over they go!
And the cataract's plunge as it thunders and roars so!
To gaze in the depths and feel the wild fear,
To gather strange flowers just as they grow,
The avalanche yonder, the geyser near—
We longed for the mountains, and the mountains are
here!

The Garden of the Gods, is at Colorado Springs,
Nature's Hall of Sculpture, with its red and gold
And blue and bronze, that brings
Art lovers of all lands its treasures to behold.
The deft hand of Michael Angelo could not mold
With craft so consummate; there is the quarried block
And cathedral like formations, ages old,
It was water's gentle erosin, and not volcanic shock
That formed these templed pillars in the green-sward
of the meadow, all of gorgeous tinted rock!

A peak is glistening forty miles away
And challenges our party to a bold ascent,
With the unknown fear and dread that mountain
climbers know,
We journey to its base on high achievement bent,
And said, we'll stand upon the mighty dome, and nothing shall prevent!
So up we went, o'er foot-hills and o'er valleys,
Up, up, an icy precipice a thousand feet or more,
We rest and gaze into the abyss, then wait till courage rallies,
Up, up, o'er rocks and snow-fields, ever upwards as before,
And stand at last upon the mighty dome, and look the country o'er!

A guide points far to the west and says 'tis Utah,
There where the foot-hills fade away like smoke,
It brings emotion of wonder and of awe,
And below, on that jagged cliff, once a guide-line
 broke,
And let three men and a girl go slipping down, with
 piteous cries that all the echoes woke.
It is a glorious day for a panorama! The sky is fair
And every object clear as far as one can look,
To stand upon the tiptop peak, and breathe the bracing
 air,
And watch the king of birds, the eagle, circling down-
 wards to his lair!

It was morning on the mountain, before the sunrise,
Earth was hidden, and all was clouds below,
In each direction for miles and miles there lies
Hills and vales of misty banks, like piled-up drifted
 snow.

It was like the making of creation, when lo!
From out those banks the orb of day was lifted,
And transfused the scene to one of heavenly glow,
Through the mists the tints and shades were rifted,
Coming cross that sea of cloud banks, piled and
 drifted!

Alone with the universe—and with God!
 It was like Transfigurations awesome hour,
 Or vision of St. John; above the clod
 And sordidness of earth, a glimpse of Infinite power.
 Showing the immensity of man's dower
 Both here and hereafter. Apocalypse!
 The Spirit and the Bride say come. Our
 Everlasting promise, the Sonship's
 Universal invitation, oft retold by Prophet's lips.

On the descent the party rested in a mountain camp
 And fished for lusty mountain trout,
 And camped upon the ground without the dew and
 damp
 Of other regions; how those gamy fish did leap and
 lash about!
 As they spun their reels and cast their flies, and hauled
 them out!
 Cool dark woods, and a day for fish,
 Salmon, pike, and rainbow-trout,
 Here is where your man doth have his wish,
 And camps around the fire at night, and cooks a savory
 dish.

Cripple Creek, Royal Gorge, and through the Pass!
Some are gasping o'er the height of land,
And still those mountains ranged along in never ending mass,
And rocks and boulders, reared like pillars, close at hand.
Through the valley runs a dark-blue river, slipping
o'er the sand,
Vast slopes, spare woods, and fields of snow,
All just as the guide-book planned,
We're creeping o'er the grade and running slow,
And yonder, on a hill, two spotted fawns and a staring doe.

To the southwest lies the Grand Canyon of The
Colorado,
One of the master-wonders of the world!
Travelers tell how other sights are but a shadow,
Towards its awesome brink our party now is lured.
But a thousand miles of travel intervenes, to be endured,
Cool nights, dry air, and railroad dust,
This is nature's sanitarium, where the sick are cured,
We'll reach our journey's end, we trust,
And meanwhile, view these rocks, faced up with
bronze and iron-rust.

Still working westward we cross the Mormon state,
 Where the course of empire once did tread,
 And catch a gleam of Utah's shimmering lake,
 And her templed city, on the western water-shed!
 Thus far our journey, through a way has led
 Of vales and orchards, watered-farms, and grove,
 But now the desert, where everything seems dead,
 And growing verdure never throve,
 And miners search and dig for treasure trove.

It is like a sea of sand, and burnt-up cinder,
 With here and there a cactus, hardy plant
 That many uses to this place doth render,
 And fruits and vegetables of other lands supplant;
 Here, 'neath the unshielded sun, both man and beast
 doth pant,
 For water, more than gold, is prized,
 The leaf curls neath the heat-rays' slant,
 Naught above but copper skies,
 Naught below, but wilts and dies.

Bring in the gushing water to this place
And you have an Eden vale!
Transform nature's ugly face
And soon be marking lands and farms and homes, for
sale,
And then the wealth of Croesus counts its tale,
The cooling, healing, water flows,
Money Captains string their rail,
The pea and lily blows,
And lo—the desert blossoms as the rose!

Arizona is a painter's paradise,
Such rich colorings, and pictures ready made,
Gray, and brown, and red and blue of skies,
And dainty scarlet tints that never fade;
And royal purple, such as Rembrandt never laid
Upon his canvas, and Sargent here
Might find a shade
Suited to every season of the year,
And create water-color art, without a peer!

Some people with enthusiasm
Call this the world's chief beauty spot,
Who can judge earth's cliff and chasm
And pick the choicest of the lot,
If beauty is splendor, and variety of color, then this
hot
And forbidding place must take a high rank,
What others think it matters not,
Drive on and view the gorgeous studded bank,
And unearthly skies, where the day's sun sank!

The Grand Canyon is a distorted dream of Nature,
A section of the world blown out,
We know it from the artist and the painter,
But cannot sense its vastness, as we walk about ;
We are like the little child, who asked who digged the
dirt all out ?
It is like looking at Jupiter, or Aladdin's Night-mare,
Men miles below halloo, but no one hears their shout,
There is such immensity of distance, both here and
everywhere,
Come promenade, and rest awhile, and breathe this
crisp southwestern air.

One now beholds earth's chiefest wonder-vision!
 A chain of mountains ranging through a gulch,
 Somewhere, below, the river runs in its deep incision,
 And there are Cathedral Stairs, where nature lavished
 much
 Of all she had, and man, and the Infinite, touch.
 The over-mastering panorama has incessant change,
 Flushing and fading—mists advancing and vanishing;
 such
 Is the climax of the mountains and the plains!
 This granite, and lime-stone, and sand-stone range!

Bright Angel Trail has another vision,
 With its miles of yellow, walled-red, and gray,
 Man's attempt at art it holds up in derision,
 And through the mists we see the people, toiling up
 the Corkscrew Way;
 It is grandest in the morning, or towards the latter
 end of day,
 A symphony of color, Jacob's Ladder, and Hermit
 Trail,
 There the lonely Point sets out in bold array,
 From the Lookout we see in last detail
 This mighty Judgement-Gulch, and Epic-poem Vale!

It was moon-light on the canyon;—day
 Torrid and unclouded, had exhausted its manifold
 arts, and now the night
 Ruled above the abyss, with its queens nocturnal sway,
 And the boundless gorge was a wonder-dream, in the
 misty purple light.
 One peered for miles into the gloom, and thought of
 goblin's might.
 A crusader stood upon the brink; one who had traveled
 far
 And looked on many a sight,
 And he was thinking of the wild, free western life
 ahead, with all that's good and bad upon a par,
 And turning to the east, he spoke, as to his guiding
 star.
 "There beyond the Rockies, just where the moon
 above
 Shines down a spangled wreath
 Is the home I love,
 And with that home I'll keep my faith!
 The newer manhood
 Cleanest of the race,
 Cleaves to the pure and good,
 And looks the evil in the face."

Five hundred miles of motor ride across Nevada,
And we're on the way,
It is a torrid land with scarce a shadow,
Maybe the soil is sandy, maybe clay,
Just when we'll reach our journey's end, we cannot
say;
Look! there are the Sierras! In a towering line they
stand,
We begin to mount them early in the day,
Up and up, and round and round, at the guide's com-
mand,
And like Moses, on a pinnacle, look into the promised
land.

III

California is a summer-land of fruit and flower,
 A carnival of roses scents the air,
 Figs and pomogranites sweet, and lemons sour,
 And great groves of oranges everywhere;
 The navel orange, king of fruits so rare,
 Grows on these slopes in ripe perfection,
 No other land can quite compare
 With California, every man's selection
 To come and bask in sunshine, and await his heavenly
 election.

This is a sonnet to the Santa Clara prune,
 Rich and wholesome, purple black and sweet,
 It should inspire a poet's loftiest tune
 If he has a mellow dish to eat;
 In winter clime no northern land can quite compete
 With California—there is Pasadena by the sea
 Where you bathe in January, and frolic in the heat,
 And fish for tuny where the tide is running free,
 And all the ocean coast laughs out in summer glee!

Yosemite, is a ten mile valley,
Tranquil and beautiful, as a Sharon vale,
Stupendous heights—where water leaps!
One should camp and tour a week, to see its rich detail,
And now we see the Bridal Veil
Rising where the cataract falls,
And one can almost smell the odors of a Cashmere dale
And hear the Bird of Paradise calls,
Shut in by these towering, adamantine walls.

Here are the giant Red Wood trees, of all the earth
The oldest living growth, with a cathedral for a base
And their summit in the sky, and when Joseph was
sold in Egypt, they had their birth!
And there is Mirror Lake, with a mountain in her face,
And there 'gainst the sky, one can trace
The monumental dome of El Capitan,
And Vernal Falls, of beauty and of grace!
All on the creator's plan,
His thoughtful, universal, gift to man.

Oh, the zest and stimulation of a change in climate!
 Strange trees and shrubs, and every feature new,
 The cool fresh air coming as a tonic,
 Just step outdoors, and half the earth's in view!
 And the thrilling hour is when the dew
 Still is like a web upon the moss and grass,
 Oh, then, half the world belongs to you,
 Out in the sparkling dawn—climbing up the mountain
 pass,
 Snorting buck—screaming bird—and leaping bass!

The next stage of journey lies through a vineyard
 valley,
 With a thousand acres or so, of luscious Sweet-Cataw-
 bas
 Hanging in heavy bunches, dripping juice; this hilly
 And forbidding country once was useless, now a gold-
 mine, thanks to irrigation's laws.
 Still speeding o'er the mileage!
 In yon lonesome woods the hawk screams, and the
 crow caws,
 And then, we spend some days at Leland Stanford Col-
 lege,
 For happiness doth partake of both wisdom, and of
 knowledge.

In these College buildings we see the architecture of
the Moor,
Brought from Spain, grace and solid beauty, at a
glance,
Here they make a scholar of the boor
If given half a chance,
And the student, his store of learning doth enhance.
The orator speaks with thrilling look and word,
The freshmen 'round the campus prance,
The sophomores advance,
The juniors read the classic lore of France,
The seniors embark on life, and tilt their intellectual
lance,
The music of the flute and violin are heard,
And the poet, 'neath the dust of ages, is interred!

On Mount Hamilton, one views the stars
Through a telescope, and worships their creator, Christ
the Lord,
The ascent is easy, riding up in cars,
And the stellar universe, gleams as a myriad horde!
And we think of God and His infinite Word,
And the way He leads us, poets, painters, workers, all,
The mystic echoes of the night are heard,
And the avalanches fall,
And the mountaineer's shrill call!

We crossed the water-gate of San Francisco—
 Peninsular City!—with the ocean all about,
 We saw her towers rising on the sky like fresco,
 And the sea-mists floating—floating, in and out.
 And there is Nobs Hill! old-time famous mount,
 Where gold-miners built their palaces, and on the
 beach is seal-rock,
 At the Cliff-House, where you watch the seals, and
 count
 Pacific's breakers rolling in with bellowing shock!
 For it is a region of pleasure-place in endless stock.

There was celebration in the town that night,
 And strains of waving music came from many a hall,
 The regal city shone bedecked and bright,
 And pleasures-goddess answered to her call!
 And some forgot that pride goeth before a fall,
 A million lights gleamed from towers tall,
 The soft moon shone down with purple haze,
 And 'Frisco—reveled in the glory of old days!

How music over-paints the world so fair,
 And makes folks think that paradise has come,
 The purring melodies on the midnight air,
 Bright gleamed the lamps in many a festive home!
 And on that fated night, the city brought forth some
 Of her richest treasure, as at the Feast Belshazzar,
 From north and south did people come,
 And men forgot—and drank their fill of pleasure!

The city slept, and everywhere was peace,
 Then came strange, unearthly, mutterings of sound,
 And whirling, sickening movements, that never seemed
 to cease,
 And an awful tumultuous heaving of the ground!
 And horrid grinding roars, that did resound
 Through the awful darkness, and people woke with
 scream and cry!
 The proud palace fell a heapless mound,
 The streets were filled, the shattered buildings lie!
 And people knew not, whether they awoke to live, or
 but to die!

Ah, and then there was many a heart-rending scene
Such as one does not like to look upon,
And people knew not what the night would bring,
And some were asking if the Judgment-hour had
 come;
And some prayed for day, and rising of the sun,
Then again those awful sounds, and lofty buildings
 weave and nod!
And when the cataclasm's work was done
Men had lost their faith in things of stone and wood,
And recognized anew the claims of Man and God.

Then came the days of fire
And burned the stricken city o'er,
All yielding to the flame's desire,
Homes, hovels, and proud tower!
Just to show the fiendish power.
They camped for days, on grass and sod,
Making the best of fate's harsh dower,
A long hard way have people trod
To learn the over-ruling ministry of God.

The City rose again, grander than before,
And stands today resplendent,
To all the world she swings a stately door
Her commerce in ascendent!
For the greatness and pride of her people, could not
 be bent,
They lead a hemisphere,
And the best of art and science have they lent
To bring earth's broadest culture here,
And none can yet fortell the greatness of the coming
 year!

Who does not love the ocean,
And on its shores would be,
The billows in commotion,
The ever-restless sea,
And breathe the ocean air, so fresh and free,
Boats bound for every clime!
And all for you and me,
Bathing on the beach in summer-time!
The kind and cruel ocean, in storm sublime.

The Golden Gates are the portal of the west,
 With towering, sentinel rocks on either hand,
 The low sun dips in the wave's crest,
 The sun that's rising on some foreign strand.
 And we think of the orient, and the distant land,
 And the rays stream back, all beautiful and gold,
 Where those towering rocky warders stand,
 And ships steam out, leaving the safe home fold!
 And know not, what treasure, or what disaster, doth
 the long journey hold.

And thus our metered tale is told,
 What new empires, O Pacific! shall rise upon thy
 shore!
 Peaceful ocean—ever young though old,
 What holds the future yet in store
 As might, and mind of Man, doth more and more
 Work out and up—Soul and Spirit, free!
 What holds the future still in store,
 And thus, our journey ends, beside the sounding sea,
 As life itself shall some day end, with Thee.

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